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In-depth evaluation of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme

Note by the Secretary-General

In conformity with paragraph 5 (e) (i) of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the attached report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, dated 6 March 1998. The report has been reviewed by the relevant departments, programmes and agencies; the Secretary-General takes note of the findings in the report and concurs with its recommendations.

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In-depth evaluation of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report reviews the achievements and shortcomings of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme in (a) supporting the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and of the International Narcotics Control Board in implementing and monitoring the international drug control treaty system; (b) facilitating the implementation of measures contained in relevant policy documents, such as the Global Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly in 1990, and conducting analytical work in support of policy implementation and policy development; and (c) executing and coordinating operational activities to assist countries meet their obligations under the international drug control system.

The report focuses on the following problems of the Programme: (a) its capacity to monitor progress achieved in the implementation of the conventions and policies developed under the international drug control system; (b) its effectiveness in the collection, analysis and dissemination of information; and (c) its role in promoting collaborative efforts in research and support of national and subregional strategies. Recommendations are made on, *inter alia*, Programme support to the International Narcotics Control Board; simplifying government reporting requirements; the Programme's integrated information system; developing networks of collaborating organizations and institutions; support to Governments in the planning of drug control programmes; and the Programme's capacity to implement programmes.

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I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-sixth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended to the General Assembly that an in-depth evaluation of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme be prepared for consideration by the Committee in 1998.[1]

2. The in-depth evaluation reviewed all the activities of the Programme. The present report is organized around the three main areas of activity identified by the General Assembly in paragraph 5 of its resolution 45/179 of 21 December 1990, by which the Programme was established. The areas include treaty implementation (see sect. III below), policy implementation and research (sect. IV) and operational activities (sect. V).

3. In the conduct of the in-depth evaluation, the following categories of information were utilized by the Central Evaluation Unit of the Office of Internal Oversight Services: (a) information in the public domain (United Nations reports and documents, and studies and reports of government agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations); (b) information from internal sources (the Programme's internal evaluation reports, reports of consultants and internal working documents); (c) structured interviews and consultations with a wide range of government representatives at Vienna, experts members of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), staff of the Programme, and staff of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and of programmes and agencies of the United Nations system participating in the work of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Drug Control. A number of telephone consultations took place with staff of government agencies, at the country level.

II. United Nations International Drug Control Programme

A. International conventions

4. Three United Nations conventions set out agreements concerning international action to combat the drug problem. The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961[2] is essentially aimed at preventing the diversion of narcotic drugs from licit medical or scientific channels into illicit traffic. The Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971,[3] in response to the diversification of drugs of abuse, introduces controls over the licit use of a number of synthetic drugs. In response to the increasing problem of drug abuse and trafficking during the 1970s and 1980s, the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988[4] provides for comprehensive measures against drug trafficking. By those conventions, Governments agreed on measures to be taken to control licit activities related to narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and chemicals – precursors – used in the manufacture of drugs, to combat illicit trafficking and to prevent abuse of drugs and treat and rehabilitate drug abusers.

B. Comprehensive strategies

5. Towards the end of the 1980s, "as gaps in the international control system were progressively closed, it became more generally apparent that the mechanisms originally created for the introduction of international supply control were not in themselves a sufficient response".[5] Increased attention was given to "activities undertaken to prevent illicit demand for drugs and to further the treatment and eventual social reintegration of drug addicts".[6] This more comprehensive and balanced approach was reflected in the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control,[7] adopted in 1987 by the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The Global Programme of Action, adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth special session, stressed that the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline should be used "as a basis for developing and translating into action, at the national, regional and international levels, to the widest extent possible, balanced strategies aimed at combating all aspects of drug abuse and illicit trafficking" (resolution S-17/2, annex, sect. II, para. 8).

C. Intergovernmental and treaty bodies

1. International Narcotics Control Board

6. INCB is the independent and quasijudicial control organ established by an international drug control treaty for the implementation and monitoring of the United Nations drug conventions. Its responsibility is to promote government compliance with the provisions of the three conventions and to assist them in that regard. The Board's specific functions include limiting, in cooperation with Governments, the production and use of drugs exclusively to medical purposes in order to prevent their diversion into illicit traffic; to that end, the Board administers various

international control systems. Through its continuous evaluation of national efforts, INCB recommends actions and suggests adjustments to both international and national control regimes.

2. Commission on Narcotic Drugs

7. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs – one of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council – is a policy-making body that is responsible for analysing the world drug abuse situation and developing proposals to strengthen international drug control. The Commission considers any changes that may be required in the existing machinery and may prepare new conventions and international instruments. The Expert Committee on Drug Dependence of the World Health Organization (WHO) makes recommendations to the Commission concerning modifying the scope of controlled substances under the 1961 and 1971 Conventions. INCB received similar responsibilities for chemicals under the 1988 Convention. The Commission takes decisions on which substances should be placed under international control, based on these recommendations, thus amending the schedules attached to the Conventions. Since 1992, the Commission also acts as the equivalent of a governing body for the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

D. Secretariat arrangements

8. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme was established in 1991 as a single programme "to unify the United Nations structure for drug abuse control to enable the United Nations to strengthen its role as the main focus for concerted international action for drug abuse control" (General Assembly resolution 45/179, para. 2). The Programme integrated three previously existing United Nations units – the Division of Narcotic Drugs, the INCB secretariat and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC). As a result of the integration of the functions of the former units, the Programme carries out both normative and technical cooperation functions. The normative functions include promoting adherence to treaties and inclusion of relevant provisions in national legislation and providing secretariat and substantive services to the Commission and INCB. The purpose of technical cooperation is primarily to assist developing countries meet their obligations in implementing the provisions of the international drug control treaty system (E/CN.7/1995/22, para. 2). The normative functions are, in principle, funded by regular budget resources and the technical assistance functions by voluntary contributions. This distinction is maintained to guarantee independence of the normative functions and of the work of INCB. For the biennium 1996-1997, regular budget resources – $16.1 million – accounted for approximately 10 per cent of total Programme resources. International drug control was one of the six overall priorities of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (Assembly resolution 45/253, sect. I, para. 12).

III. Implementing the conventions

A. Adherence

9. INCB has stressed that "a large part of the shortcomings of the international drug control system may be attributed to the fact that the conventions were meant to be universal but have not yet been universally adopted".[8] It should be noted that States not party to a particular treaty are encouraged to apply treaty provisions voluntarily, and that, in practice, all Governments cooperate with INCB monitoring. INCB maintains ongoing discussions with Governments through regular consultations and through missions. Various sectors of the Programme contribute to that effort, either centrally or as a result of operational activities (see para. 46 below). The adoption of the 1988 Convention generated a renewed interest in the drug control system and the rate of adherence to the two prior conventions increased substantially in the years that followed (see below).

Number of States parties to United Nations drug control conventions

	1984	*1990*	*1997*
Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961	116	130	160
Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971	78	103	149
Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988	—	31	144

10. Adherence to the conventions in the sense of formal ratification of their provisions does not in itself ensure their implementation. The Economic and Social Council has stressed that, while the current drug control treaties and the Global Programme of Action provide the necessary framework for international cooperation, "what is of paramount importance is the political will and the sustained

commitment of Governments to ensure their effective implementation. The adoption of strong domestic legislation and policies is an essential prerequisite for making full use of the opportunities for international cooperation provided by the international drug control treaties" (E/1996/89, para. 24). Many States have adopted new national legislation or have made substantial legislative changes after becoming parties; States usually also needed to enact procedural legislation for their substantive law to be given full practical effect.

11. There are a number of regional instruments and arrangements of relevance to the objectives of the international drug control system. Regional instruments, in general, contain more detailed or stringent requirements than United Nations conventions. However, when States need to interact with other States outside their own region, there are situations where the lack of common standards and requirements hinders collaboration.

B. Monitoring implementation

12. In carrying out its functions (see para. 6 above), INCB monitors the licit manufacture of, and international trade in, drugs through, primarily, government reporting received by its secretariat. With respect to illicit manufacture and trafficking of drugs, analyses of the Board's secretariat are based also on information received from various units of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and from other organizations, such as the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and the World Customs Organization (WCO). When weaknesses in control systems are identified, INCB seeks the adoption of remedial measures by the Government concerned, mostly through consultations with it. The reports of the Board are also a useful mechanism to ensure that situations requiring attention are being discussed by the appropriate international bodies. In 1994, the Commission expressed the hope that the Board would publish in its annual report the outcome of its consultations with States, without infringing the provisions relating to confidentiality of information contained in the conventions.[9] In recent years, INCB reports have contained a clearer reference to specific "worrying" situations than was the case in the past. "The INCB, as a technical body, has an impressive record of encouraging compliance with provisions in the Single and Psychotropic [1961 and 1971] Conventions by discreet action".[10] There are examples of party reservations that touched on essential principles of the 1988 Convention and were dropped as a result of INCB intervention. However, until the present time, INCB has not made use of the final steps foreseen in the 1961 and 1971 Conventions against a country that failed to adopt necessary remedial measures.

13. INCB organizes country missions to gain a more comprehensive and direct awareness of drug abuse situations and problems involving treaty implementation. As a result of those missions, national legislation has been strengthened and the coordination of national drug control efforts improved; in appropriate cases, INCB has recommended that technical or financial assistance be provided in support of governments' efforts. However, a number of INCB country missions have been postponed in recent years owing to limited regular budget funding and to the continuing expansion of the work of the Board. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1996/20 of 23 July 1996, encouraged the Board to intensify its programme of country missions and also encouraged the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme "to support the Board in its efforts to hold periodic consultations with Governments and to provide the Board with information on progress achieved and deficiencies noted in programmes".

14. It was expected, in 1991, that greater synergy between the various units of the Programme would be realized after integration of the Board's secretariat within the Programme, while the secretariat continued to be responsible to the Board for substantive matters. The information available to Board members through the Programme and the support of its field network have been valuable in the preparation and in the course of the missions; however, in general, the potential for collaboration between INCB and the Programme has not been fully exploited. Substantive studies and comments requested by INCB require contributions from several Programme units; studies are frequently prepared by Programme staff in addition to their normal workload, and the timeliness and quality of the documents are uneven. Conversely, the Executive Director of the Programme has rarely requested assistance from INCB. The advocacy role of the Board, for example, is generally not put to use by the Programme to facilitate the resolution of "worrying" situations. The review by the Central Evaluation Unit of internal documents indicates that Programme staff are of the view that, as most INCB secretariat work is related to the analysis of statistical data, it has little operational relevance for the Programme field network. However, the role of the INCB secretariat has operational aspects; for example, an increasing number of competent national authorities are requesting the assistance of the Board in verifying the legitimacy of individual shipments and are providing alerts to other Governments about attempts at diversion. There are

examples of collaboration of Programme field offices with INCB that contributed to preventing diversions. This collaboration could be further developed in several areas, including for the control of licit substances, where mandates are clear and systems in place are well established.

C. Assessments of implementation

1. Commission on Narcotic Drugs

15. At meetings of the Commission, delegations have frequently expressed concern about trends of the global drug problem reported by INCB. The General Assembly, in its resolution 48/12 of 28 October 1993, requested the Commission, with the support of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and in cooperation with INCB, "to monitor and evaluate action at the national and international level in implementing the international drug control instruments, with a view to identifying areas of satisfactory progress and weakness". With the support of an ad hoc intergovernmental advisory group, the Programme prepared a report to enable the Commission to identify concrete action-oriented recommendations on the issues covered by resolution 48/12. In section IV of its resolution 51/64 of 12 December 1996, the Assembly decided to convene a special session in 1998 "devoted to assessing the existing situation within the framework of a comprehensive and balanced approach that includes all aspects of the problem [of illicit drugs], with a view to strengthening international cooperation to address the problem". The Commission decided that the preparatory process should focus on the reaffirmation of the political commitment of Governments to international drug control, on the issue of demand reduction and on a number of strategic measures.

2. International Narcotics Control Board

16. In 1994, in its report on the effectiveness of the international drug control treaties, INCB drew the attention of Governments to areas where the treaty provisions within the Board's mandate had not been effective enough or had not been adequate. The Board commented that "it is particularly important for national drug control legislation to be continuously reviewed and evaluated in a systematic manner ... The Board is not equipped at present to conduct such an analysis on a regular, country-by-country basis".[11]

3. Role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme

17. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1996/20, encouraged INCB to continue to evaluate the global drug problem and encouraged the Executive Director of the Programme "to provide the Board with information on progress achieved and deficiencies noted in programmes to reduce the illicit demand for and supply of [illicit drugs], as well as in control measures governing their transit". Treaty implementation depends on the adoption of national drug control legislation as well as other factors such as law enforcement capacity or the existence of rehabilitation programmes for drug users. Regarding the review of drug control legislation, the Programme prepared for the thirty-eighth session of the Commission a review of "the implementation of the treaty provisions in national legislation, which [INCB] hopes will contribute to providing a basis for the beginning of a general evaluation".[11] Several units within the Programme are contributing to such work. For example, the Legal Affairs Section has produced a legal brief summarizing the legislation passed by countries to implement the conventions and has made contributions to INCB reports that were appreciated. However, the task of systematically reviewing drug control legislation is not specifically identified in the 1997 UNDCP Organization Handbook (UNDCP/OH/Rev.1) and no unit appears responsible for it or for the coordination of related activities within the Programme.

D. Modifying the scope of the conventions' schedules

18. Timely decisions on modifying the scope of the conventions' schedules are required in order to ensure the efficacy of the international drug control system. Under the 1971 Convention, the "similarity concept", used for the scheduling of new drugs under the 1961 Convention, was replaced by more complex criteria. INCB observed that, as a result, Governments have been hesitating "to send notifications for changing the scope of control of the 1971 Convention"; WHO initiated all recent reviews, and, "in order to avoid arbitrary decisions, [it] was forced to build up a complex and lengthy 'evaluation' mechanism".[12]

19. One recent example of the scheduling problem concerns amphetamine-type stimulants. Following Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/20 of 24 July 1995, expert meetings convened by the Programme to discuss countermeasures against the abuse and illicit trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants concluded that the

Commission should initiate a process designed to resolve the problem of divergent scheduling principles, criteria and procedures under the three treaties regarding the control of amphetamine-type stimulants and their precursors. The Council, in section II, paragraph 10, of its resolution 1997/41 of 21 July 1997, urged the Executive Director of the Programme to initiate a review of the various means, such as generic scheduling, used by Governments to control amphetamine-type stimulants and their by-products or analogues. With a similar concern in regard to all synthetic drugs, in 1997, the Council of the European Union adopted a Joint Action, with a view to establishing a system for the rapid exchange of information and risk assessment through which new synthetic drugs not currently listed in any of the schedules to the 1971 Convention, and which pose a comparable serious risk to public health as the substances listed in schedules I and II thereto, may be placed under control in member States of the European Union. That initiative meets the need to provide the European Union with a more flexible and rapid mechanism than previously available at the international level.

E. Global monitoring of additional measures recommended by the conventions

20. Global monitoring and evaluation are particularly important for the effective implementation of the additional measures recommended by the conventions. For example, regarding measures to counter money-laundering, the 1988 Convention called on parties to develop the necessary regulations. To date, the most developed system is supervised by the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF); FATF, established in 1989 by the major industrialized countries (Group of Seven) and the President of the Commission of the European Communities, has a membership of 26 countries and jurisdictions. Other multilateral initiatives include the Asia Pacific Group on Money-Laundering and the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force. The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS) contributed to counter money-laundering activities in the Americas, including self-assessments in 27 countries. However, in 1995, INCB noted "with concern that no concrete steps have been taken by the international community to effectively coordinate the fight against money-laundering worldwide"; and that the United Nations would be the logical body "to undertake monitoring of progress achieved".[13] At the end of 1996, the Programme and the then Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division (now the Centre for International Crime Prevention) launched a joint Global Programme against Money-Laundering; the collaboration of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme with the Centre for International Crime Prevention provides an opportunity to address all aspects of money-laundering. The Programme's model legislation on money-laundering has recently been updated with the participation of the Centre and presents a comprehensive approach to the problem.

21. The conventions leave it to Governments to define measures appropriate for demand reduction; that approach "may have led Governments to underestimate the importance of such measures for a long time".[14] INCB stated that "present treaty obligations may indeed be supplemented by those of other instruments, emphasizing the importance of demand reduction in the context of comprehensive drug control strategies and stating general principles and guidelines"; and that demand reduction of illicit drugs is concerned with prevention and rehabilitation programmes that address at the same time "the use of licit psychoactive substances, such as alcohol and nicotine".[15] The lack of a comprehensive perspective in the promotion of such programmes has, in the past, reduced the usefulness of the Programme's collaboration with other programmes and agencies, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and WHO. The declaration on the guiding principles of drug demand reduction, which has been drafted for the General Assembly at its special session of 1998, emphasizes that "programmes to reduce demand for drugs should be part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce demand for all substances of abuse" (E/CN.7/1998/PC/6, para. 5). In that context, it should be noted that, in addition to the 1961, 1971 and 1988 Conventions, other instruments, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[16] now ratified by all but two States, also address drug abuse issues.

IV. Implementing the comprehensive strategies

A. Gathering information from Governments

22. The Programme is responsible for the implementation of policy decisions of the legislative bodies of the United Nations and for conducting analytical work in support of policy implementation and policy development. In 1991, when the Programme was established, the two main policy documents were the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary

Outline and the Global Programme of Action (see para. 5 above). In carrying out this responsibility, the single most important aspect of the Programme's work is the gathering, analysis and dissemination of information. At the thirty-fourth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, "many speakers recognized that, as a basis for its policy decisions, the Commission needed to receive complete and impartial information on all aspects of the drug situation worldwide".[17] In compliance with convention requirements and various resolutions, Governments generate relevant information and report it to the Programme. The Programme was also mandated to collect additional information required from other appropriate sources and to coordinate information collection by other organizations.

23. In addition to reporting on the licit manufacture of, and trade in, drugs, monitored by INCB (see para. 12 above), the Programme routinely collects information from Governments through two sets of annual questionnaires: the annual reports questionnaires, which cover illicit drug abuse, including policies and programmes; and the questionnaire designed to monitor implementation of the Global Programme of Action. The response rate to the questionnaires has been consistently insufficient to obtain reliable data. The average response rate to the annual reports questionnaires for the period 1990-1997 was 42 per cent; as for the questionnaire on the Global Programme of Action, the rate was considerably lower.

24. The data-collection process at the national level involves a large number of institutions. To compound these problems, different authorities in one country often have different standards and assessments for drug problems (see para. 30 below). One of the criticisms of INCB has been that the Programme's processing of the questionnaires does not provide for effective quality checks, as is the case with data reported to the Board. The system relies on what Governments report, but the Programme offers little methodological support, tools or guidelines on how countries could strengthen national drug information systems. Data items requested in the questionnaires are not always clearly defined and leave much room for interpretation. Different requests for information are sometimes sent to Governments on identical subjects, in these two questionnaires and in follow-up to Commission, Economic and Social Council or General Assembly resolutions.

25. There is no strategy guiding the design of questionnaires that would limit the range of questions to needed and reliable information. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1993/35 of 27 July 1993, encouraged the Programme "to integrate its annual reports questionnaire into a single simplified document, which should be coordinated, when appropriate, with other international bodies in order to facilitate timely and complete replies by all Member States"; the request was reiterated in 1994 and in 1996. In 1997, the Programme reviewed the appropriateness of the annual questionnaires and made recommendations to obtain a better response rate and data of better quality. It is planned to field-test a simplified questionnaire in 1998.

26. Additional efforts are needed to continue the development of the software package to be used by national drug control administrations. This package was finalized at the end of 1996 by the Programme, with the support of several Member States; for the moment, it covers, *inter alia*, licit activities and seizure data (see para. 12 above). Many countries and regional organizations have inquired whether additional modules could be made to cover the remaining data-collection activities of the Programme. In the meantime, a number of organizations and initiatives – such as CICAD of OAS, the multi-city monitoring network, or the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), set up to draw a reliable picture of the drug problem in Europe – have begun conducting surveys and studies, at the national, regional and global levels, sometimes looking at different aspects of the same situation. WHO and its regional offices collect information about psychoactive substances available through regional and national epidemiology networks. Greater information-sharing between such organizations and initiatives is needed to avoid duplication of efforts and avoid placing additional and conflicting demands on national and regional information sources. EMCDDA stated that, in addition to information provided directly by Governments, it was collecting information collated from various national sources by national focal points that have been designated by Governments and that it was implementing procedures and criteria for quality control on the data received.

B. Information-processing capacity of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme

27. The Programme's Information Resources Management Branch was responsible for developing and managing "an integrated information system, including databases on seizures of illicit drugs, precursors, money-laundering and information on the nature, trends and patterns of abuse, as well as on licit supply of and demand for [drugs]".[18] Those responsibilities have not been fully carried out. The annual reports questionnaire database is fragmented and

inaccessible for data more than four years old. Advice given in the context of Programme-funded projects for strengthening national drug information systems is not coordinated within the Programme. Vast amounts of other data and information obtained from heterogenous sources, constantly coming to the Programme, are not organized and hence largely inaccessible. The Central Registry was "decentralized" in 1995. Delegations commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that different sections of the Programme may request from them information that they had already transmitted to the Programme. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1996/20, requested the Executive Director of the Programme to report to the Commission at its fortieth session on current efforts to collect and analyse information, with a view to unifying and simplifying the collection system for use by the Governments and the Programme, including INCB.

28. The Programme has taken a number of initiatives to address well-defined sectoral information needs, including the following:

(a) The INCB database for the control of chemicals used in the manufacture of illicit drugs – precursors – has been successfully developed;

(b) A data-sharing project with the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and WCO, initiated in 1992, was put on hold by the Programme during the 1994-1995 funding cuts. The project was relaunched in 1996, this time using the Interpol software, with the goal of establishing a common data set on seizures of illicit drugs and of identifying subjects in which the production of joint analytical papers would be of strategic value to Governments. By the end of 1997, the data-matching pilot tests have been successfully conducted.

29. The implementation of the more comprehensive International Drug Abuse Assessment System (IDAAS) proved more problematic. Following a 1983 resolution of the Commission, IDAAS was established in 1988 to improve the overall quality of information submitted to the Commission on extent, patterns and trends of drug abuse worldwide. In 1995, an internal evaluation of IDAAS concluded that the System had been maintained by the Programme as a response to specific mandates and was not a comprehensive system for gathering and disseminating data. During 1996 and 1997, there were virtually no resources to operate the project.

30. In 1997, the Programme produced its first *World Drug Report*, which aimed at providing a global overview of the drug problem. The *Report* stressed that "wide divergences in the definition of terms and in methodologies for collecting and analysing data preclude significant comparisons over time or between countries [and that] some gaps in our knowledge could be bridged by a more conscientious and homogeneous approach to data collection".[19] In particular, the lack of reliable routine indicators to provide a better understanding of a country's drug problems impedes efforts to share available information and make it relevant for decision-making. Several organizations have related ongoing work in their domains of concern. At the Programme, during the period 1996-1997, limited work took place for the development of analytical tools and to review the possibilities of sharing information with other organizations. In 1997, the Programme convened an expert meeting with representatives of major institutions in the field of drug information and of regional networks on drug epidemiology to review their ongoing activities and agree on exploring the potential of collaboration in the following areas: (a) to analyse the scope of existing drug information systems; (b) to improve the comparability of key indicators; (c) to identify model national drug information systems; and (d) to improve early warning systems.

C. Analytical activities and issues

31. For many domains of concern to the Programme, a great deal of relevant sectoral expertise exists in agencies of the United Nations system and in other organizations. In its interactions with specialized agencies, the comparative advantages of the Programme are its multidisciplinary staff and extensive field experience. In some areas, such as forensic and toxicology activities carried out by its Laboratory, the Programme has a long-established tradition of cooperative activity. In others, such as demand reduction and money-laundering, cooperative activities are recent. Regarding drug law enforcement, the Programme is making use of the specialized expertise available at WCO and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol).

1. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme Laboratory

32. One central activity of the Laboratory, established in 1954, is to establish and maintain, in collaboration with a network of national and regional institutions, internationally accepted scientific and technical standards and methods for adoption by laboratories around the world. Although the methods have not yet been validated in a collaborative exercise, the system of choosing methods using consultative meetings has proved to be expeditious and acceptable to most countries. The Laboratory distributes reference samples

of drugs under international control, and their metabolites and precursors; for most laboratories in developing countries, the Programme is the only source of drug standards. The Laboratory also prepares and distributes to law enforcement authorities two types of identification kits for the detection, at such sites as border points or airports, of drugs and precursors under international control. Furthermore, the Laboratory contributes to the work of INCB and is represented in the advisory expert group reviewing new substances for inclusion in convention schedules. Its expertise is a basic necessity for the work of the Legal Section in answering legal questions from Governments or providing assistance on updating national laws requiring scientific as well as legal inputs.

33. Since 1992, training of laboratory personnel in developing countries was decentralized from the Laboratory to regional training centres and collaborating institutions around the world. The international quality assurance programme developed by the Laboratory since 1993 could, given sufficient resources, evolve as a proficiency testing programme; through this programme and other capacity-building exercises, the need for basic assistance packages is expected to decrease. Owing to limitations of resources, the Laboratory has sometimes implemented new mandates after long delays. Even for ongoing mandates, the level of activity may be insufficient; for example, recommended methods and standards are updated once every five years, which is insufficient to take into account the present rate of change in the global drug situation.

34. A number of government representatives are of the view that, within existing mandates and given the necessary resources, the Laboratory should be more pro-active, assisted by expert groups, in studying or promoting research on new synthetic drugs, gathering more information on health aspects of drug abuse and studying other approaches than the technology available for the detection of illicit substances present in large containers, which is very expensive. Those initiatives could be formulated as projects of the Programme Fund and implemented in collaboration with WHO, WCO and other specialized organizations.

2. Promotion of methodologies and best practices

35. The research and analytical work of the Programme is designed to identify best practices, promote the adoption of common definitions and standards – the work of the Laboratory being the best example – or study the mutual influence between the illicit drug phenomenon and other social, economic and political factors. Recent examples of the Programme's research work include the following:

(a) The review of abuse and illicit trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants (see para. 19 above). Here, the Programme's work has contributed to the development of international policy on a situation perceived originally as a local problem with the potential of becoming a global one;

(b) The Programme has made progress in developing a model for making comprehensive assessments of illicit cultivation. On a few occasions, the Programme has been in a position to provide better available estimates of illicit cultivation than did other official sources. Based on its experience with various survey methods, the Programme intends to promote standards and effective methodologies in this area;

(c) Regarding drug-abuse situations, in regions where important information gaps exist, the Programme has enhanced its capacity to collect and analyse data, particularly through rapid assessments; several organizations stated to the Central Evaluation Unit that the Programme's work on the rapid assessment methodology, which needs to be further developed and tested in collaboration with specialized institutions, is a good example of its role in the promotion of methodologies and tools that can be used by national experts.

Not all research work was equally appreciated, however. For example, work on "best practices" appeared insufficiently developed. Several factors may have contributed to this situation: the lack of a comprehensive evaluation of policy effectiveness and insufficient networking to integrate the relevant experience accumulated by other institutions (see paras. 42-43 below).

D. Advocacy

1. Global clearing-house function of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme

36. The Global Programme of Action called on Member States to strengthen the role of the United Nations as an information centre on the drug problem. To raise public awareness of the negative effects of drug abuse and of effective countermeasures, it was expected that information campaigns would intensify around the promotion of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse (1991-2000). In 1994, UNICEF, which had valuable experience in this respect, offered to assist the Programme in strengthening its communication capacity. The Programme was unsure of the direction to take, and it was only in 1997 that an overall strategy to organize and coordinate information activities was adopted and launched. It is too early to review its

results. In spite of the lack of an overall strategy, a few individual initiatives, such as the global "Sports against drugs" campaign in cooperation with the International Olympic Committee, attained the desired visibility.

37. Government agencies interviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit were of the view that, although Programme representatives provide, upon request, the information available to them, the Programme's role as a global clearing house for information on effective policies and techniques, or on assistance available, has not been carried out. Its efforts to ensure that government delegations at Vienna have access to institutional and technical information that the Programme generates were noted. However, at the country level, awareness of the Programme's purpose and programmes rarely extends beyond inner circles of the central Government. Professional groups concerned with aspects of drug abuse control are not always informed of the existence of United Nations programmes. Even, in countries where national drug control legislation has recently been adopted, judges do not necessarily have access to information on the international drug control system other than that released by the mass media. Frequently, within organizations collaborating with the Programme, knowledge of its objectives and capacity to implement or support programmes does not extend beyond the officer in direct contact with the Programme. No document provides this "corporate" information in a brief and concrete manner.

38. There are examples of newsletters produced by the Programme's regional offices that are useful channels for communication between those involved in drug control programmes in the region; but publishing costs impede their development. Recently, the Programme has begun to publish a few selected papers presenting the results of its research work with policy implications – its "technical series" – which could generate wide interest. The series distribution list is based on the contact lists of various units and needs to be derived in a more systematic manner. The Programme has not defined a general policy guiding the dissemination of material such as country profiles, reports of experts on specific issues, summaries of legislation or the exchange of information between those involved in drug control activities. There is a general perception that the Programme is reluctant to share information and to make it easily accessible to all those who may need it. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1993/35, reaffirmed the request to the Programme to disseminate, through the database of IDAAS, the information on demand reduction received from Governments, specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. In 1997, the Programme's country profiles, or country "situation reports", were still not widely disseminated. As a result, there were situations where government representatives outside Vienna requested profiles on the drug situation in their own country from sources other than the Programme.

2. Mobilization of non-governmental organizations

39. To ensure broad-based support for drug control objectives, as requested by the General Assembly in several resolutions (see, for example, resolution 47/101, para. 6), the Programme convened or supported the organization of meetings with non-governmental organizations. To date, however, the Programme does not seem to have formulated a clear policy in dealing with non-governmental organizations and ways in which to make use of their work in this field. For example, most non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council are not invited to concern themselves with the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs; invitations to attend its sessions are sent to about 60 non-governmental organizations. Selection criteria are obscure to most of them. No working group arrangements with non-governmental organizations have been promoted, as has been done in other programmes; such arrangements could have been based on mandates contained in the Global Programme of Action. In November 1997, when most of the preparatory process for the 1998 special session of the General Assembly was completed, the accreditation procedure for the participation of non-governmental organizations at the special session had not yet been initiated.

40. In 1989, the Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Narcotic Drugs had made proposals to develop a non-governmental organization directory. In 1996, the Programme published a directory of non-governmental organizations working in drug demand reduction to facilitate networking and the exchange of information and expertise among them. The directory, presented as one of the outcomes of the 1994 World Forum on the Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Drug Demand Reduction, was prepared without consulting the Vienna Committee. The directory includes 359 non-governmental organizations worldwide and is based on replies to a questionnaire sent by the Programme; it should be noted that the Vienna Committee itself maintains a list of more than 1,000 non-governmental organizations. As a result of the methodology used for the directory's development, non-governmental organizations known for their demand reduction activities do not appear in it, and the information it contains is general and of limited usefulness.

41. The Programme works with non-governmental organizations as project partners on the basis of their potential contribution to the fight against drug abuse. A number of grants are awarded to national non-governmental organizations on the basis of proposals they submit to the Programme. In 1996, 11 per cent of Programme funds went to non-governmental organizations or non-governmental organization-sponsored projects. However, in funding those projects – or sometimes in undertaking important events with non-governmental organizations – the Programme does not consult or even inform the Vienna and New York Non-Governmental Organization Committees on Narcotic Drugs, which include international as well as national non-governmental organizations. Although such coordination is not a requirement under United Nations administrative rules, it should be noted that several networks of non-governmental organizations coexist – some are supported by the Programme, others are not – and, without adequate consultation, they will implement uncoordinated and, to some extent, duplicative strategies. The Programme did not develop clear guidelines for cooperation with non-governmental organizations that could be promoted with the assistance of the two Non-Governmental Organization Committees on Narcotic Drugs at Vienna and New York. A number of non-governmental organization networks are utilized by agencies of the United Nations system. For example, UNESCO is implementing a project in the field of drug abuse prevention designed to reinforce the networking of non-governmental organizations and educational institutions; support is needed for such initiatives, which aim primarily at tapping the potential of existing networks.

3. Promoting other collaborative efforts

42. In 1991, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in its resolution 1 (XXXIV), requested the Programme, in order to strengthen the role of the Programme as the main focus for concerted international action for drug abuse control, to make an inventory of all regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations engaged in the fight against drug abuse in all its aspects and to use the inventory as a basis for the development of proposals to improve mutual collaboration between the Programme and the organizations involved.[20] The resolution has not been implemented; the Programme does not maintain the inventory envisaged as a basis for collaboration and to build an information network. According to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, the Programme would enlist the active participation of institutions with advanced knowledge and technology and promote international collaboration and coordinated training programmes.[21] Only the Laboratory relies now on a well-developed network of collaborating institutions in 35 countries worldwide. Other units have recently established formal agreements for collaboration with 11 institutions selected according to their capacity to contribute to the work-plan objectives of those units. However, this effort cannot be said to realize the Programme's mandated role to be the main focus for concerted international action. A few regional organizations, which, in general, are satisfied with Programme collaboration, observed, nonetheless, that sometimes Programme field offices or divisions act as if they were not aware of what other entities have done and of their capacity for research.

43. Increased collaboration with organizations conducting relevant research is needed to present jointly to policy makers the results of assessments and policy recommendations. In programme areas where the Programme is formulating far-reaching strategies, supporting evidence from centres with different expertise, and not necessarily agreeing in principle with the Programme, would better convince policy makers of the adequacy of the proposed course of action. For example, in 1997, inputs for the initial formulation of a global strategy towards the elimination of the illicit cultivation of drug crops were not secured by the Programme from organizations with expertise on relevant economic issues. The Programme decided, instead, to carry out a study, with in-house expertise and a limited number of consultants, to provide a blueprint for implementation of the strategy.

44. Governments make requests to different organizations for related work. For example, regarding amphetamine-type stimulants, the Programme carried out a review requested by the Economic and Social Council (see para. 19 above); concomitantly, WHO reviewed the social and health aspects of, and policy responses to, amphetamine-type stimulants use. In the course of 1996 and 1997, WHO, the Programme, and experts within the European Union were all engaged in work on amphetamine-type stimulants. Although an attempt was made to maintain close cooperation, the work – which partly reflected different mandates – was not coordinated well enough to ensure that the conclusions of one group of experts were communicated in a timely manner to the other groups.

V. Operational activities of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme

45. The UNFDAC secretariat was established in 1971 in response to the escalating incidence of drug abuse throughout the world, in order to develop a plan for concerted action against drug abuse and to mobilize voluntary contributions to finance it. The main objectives of the Programme's operational activities under the Fund are (a) to help Governments in setting up adequate drug control structures and to elaborate comprehensive national and regional drug control strategies and programmes, and (b) to assist them in the development of subregional initiatives and plans of action. In spite of the Programme's difficulties and shortcomings, reviewed below, the operational activities of the Programme are appreciated by recipient and donor countries alike.

A. Legal assistance

46. The adoption of national drug control legislation is considered a prerequisite to the effective implementation of strategies and programmes (see para. 10 above). Since 1992, in response to the Global Programme of Action (General Assembly resolution S-17/2, annex, para. 52), to complement its existing activities, the Programme established its Legal Advisory Programme. Through this programme, assistance is offered to States whose legislation is found not to meet the requirements of the conventions. A large number of States have become parties to one or all three international drug control conventions after receiving assistance – 17 States to the 1961 Convention, 25 States to the 1971 Convention and 38 States to the 1988 Convention. Legal advisory support is provided during the domestic passage of legislation and, through legal workshops, to help identify and resolve implementation problems that arise. In addition, model legislation was developed to promote more uniform implementation of the conventions and to facilitate international cooperation; such model laws are updated, taking into account experience and new developments.

47. All officials interviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit commented positively on this aspect of the Programme's work and were of the view that the Legal Advisory Programme – with a staff of two advisers – had been insufficiently developed. The Legal Advisory Programme works closely with an informal network of interregional and regional partners. This network needs to be extended, in particular for the training of prosecutors and judges; to this end, new agreements with partners were concluded in 1997. Joint work with existing partners needs to be evaluated. The majority of States parties to the conventions have now completed their legislative upgrading or are at an advanced stage of the process. However, many still require assistance in effectively implementing the legislation, particularly in relation to complex new issues, such as freezing and forfeiting the proceeds of crime, or the regulatory and criminal justice aspects of the analogue trade. Although the legal workshops referred to in paragraph 46 above provided some assistance, a number of national authorities commented on difficulties in adjusting national penal codes to take into account model legislation. In general, the usefulness of the Programme's initial assistance is compromised by the lack of continued support for implementation, which is needed as long as the capacity of national institutions is not self-sustainable.

B. Promotion of national master plans

48. The Programme encourages Governments to adopt drug control master plans; this approach was conceived by UNFDAC in the early 1980s in order to promote instruments containing comprehensive analyses of drug control issues and requirements for programme implementation at the national and regional levels. The Programme assists Governments in the formulation of these master plans, which can be a long process. By the end of 1996, 70 countries or regional groupings had adopted master plans; during the period 1992-1996, the Programme had provided some form of support, such as missions or more comprehensive projects, to 37 of them. The model format and guidelines prepared by the Programme, as well as advice and assistance, were found, in general, useful. A Programme evaluation in 1997 noted that when first developed by UNFDAC, master-planning exercises were undertaken with only limited involvement on the part of the recipient countries. There are still cases where master plans are drafted largely by Programme project personnel, and the link between the master plans and the national programmes they are designed to coordinate is not always clearly perceived by national authorities. Several organizations of the United Nations system commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that the Programme suffers from the lack of involvement of the specialized agencies in the development of national master plans. In the most successful cases, the Programme limited its role to advocacy activities until Governments themselves initiated the planning process. In such cases, Programme personnel were perceived as advisers to national

ministries rather than as outsiders, and implementation was easier to coordinate, including the delivery of international assistance. In 1996, the Commission, in its resolution 6 (XXXIX), invited the Programme "to coordinate the use of existing regional forums to share experience relating to the development, implementation and evaluation of national drug control master plans".[22]

C. Facilitating subregional and regional collaboration

49. At the subregional level, the Programme is promoting cooperation using more flexible planning instruments, such as memoranda of understanding and, where warranted by circumstances, subregional action plans. Assistance is provided from programme headquarters by a field office or, in the case of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in collaboration with the regional commission. All government officials interviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit gave clear examples of how useful Programme initiatives had been in facilitating bilateral or subregional collaboration. The work contributed to the definition of common policies and procedures and helped to establish direct professional contacts between government law enforcement and other agencies and, as a result, the subregional dimensions of the drug problem, such as cross-border trafficking routes, displacement of illicit crops, or precursor control, could be more effectively addressed. The Programme also supports joint development of government institutions and assists national experts in providing training to neighbouring countries, contributing to regional capacity-building.

50. Another aspect of Programme support to regional collaboration is its servicing of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, the Subcommission in the Near and Middle East and the four regional gatherings of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA). The regional HONLEA have provided effective forums for networking among drug law enforcement authorities and the direct exchange of views and information. The Commission welcomed the decision to review on a biennial basis the status of implementation of recommendations adopted at meetings of subsidiary bodies and considered that delegations at meetings of HONLEA and the Subcommission should be headed by those who had the principal responsibility for law enforcement efforts.[23] The Commission, in its resolution 4 (XXXIX), also requested the Executive Director of the Programme to consider organizing forums on demand reduction at the regional level.[22] Two forums were organized: one in Tunisia in 1996, and the other in the United Arab Emirates in 1997.

D. Coordinating assistance for drug control programmes

51. The Programme was requested to facilitate the coordination of international assistance in several areas. For example, the General Assembly requested the United Nations to act as a clearinghouse for information on training programmes in drug law enforcement (resolution S-17/2, annex, para. 80). In response, the Programme established a training unit and, in 1992, a first meeting of training experts from nine countries with international assistance programmes, and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), was held. In 1993, the Programme drafted a training strategy; it proposed, *inter alia*, to collect systematically information on ongoing and planned training activities in all sectors and to initiate the development of programmes in sectors insufficiently serviced. The Training Unit was abolished the same year in the expectation that the coordination of training could function in a decentralized manner. Various substantive units and field representatives have subsequently made efforts to coordinate international and national training programmes; however, no comprehensive coordination exists. Organizations commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that training opportunities they offer have not been used to their full extent.

52. Requests are also made for coordination of drug control assistance by geographical areas. For example, in central and eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States, donor countries recommended, in 1993, that the Programme take a more pro-active role in establishing priorities for all the participating donor countries.[24] In 1993, the Programme established a Coordination Mechanism, which included an Assistance Monitoring and Information System, involving donor and recipient countries. Information tools, such as strategic country profiles, provide a clear and complete picture of the drug-related situation and of major trends, as well as past, ongoing and planned assistance activities in the region. In 1995, the internal evaluation of the Coordination Mechanism concluded that the creation of similar mechanisms in other regions appears to be a viable and desirable option but should be examined on a case-by-case basis. In 1997, a system identical to the Assistance Monitoring and Information System was installed in the Programme's regional office for the Caribbean.

E. Priority setting

53. The 1985 in-depth evaluation of the United Nations drug control programme considered by the Committee for Programme and Coordination concluded that "the limited resources of UNFDAC are best utilized for producing catalytic change rather than major substantive change" (E/AC.51/1985/8, para. 113). This has generally continued to be the case. The activities of the Programme have led to a number of changes and initiatives in drug control in some countries but operational assistance has not been commensurate with the escalating problems of drug abuse, illicit traffic and related phenomena. In 1996, an external review commented that, in many cases, Programme contributions to drug control efforts have been too small to make a significant impact. During its debate on the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, the Commission considered that "increased attention should be given to establishing priorities and developing support for the programme"[25] Criteria for selecting priorities include identification of specific drug control targets needed for Programme involvement.

54. At the end of 1997, the Programme decided to review the experience accumulated over time in the elimination of illicit crops to formulate a global strategy to eliminate such crops; the strategy would result in a comprehensive proposal for action by national Governments, bilateral and multilateral institutions and the Programme. Most officials interviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit saw merit in this approach to promote an initiative with a clear time-frame and objectives designed to eliminate an important element of the drug problem, or at least to reduce it to a manageable level. The Programme intends to apply the same approach to other core areas of concern, such as demand reduction, stimulants, organized crime and terrorism. The last two issues require the involvement of the Centre for International Crime Prevention.

F. Coordination within the United Nations system

55. The General Assembly, in its resolution 44/141 of 15 December 1989, requested the Secretary-General to coordinate at the inter-agency level the development of a United Nations system-wide action plan on drug abuse control aimed at the full implementation of all existing mandates. Coordination was conducted through the ACC machinery, in particular the ACC Subcommittee on Drug Control. The Programme has made several attempts to update and extend the United Nations system-wide action plan on drug abuse control but, as it now stands, it is nowhere near system-wide. Among those organizations that participated in the System-wide Action Plan, existing mechanisms could not ensure that the Plan would be used to guide programme implementation, particularly when new activities were developed in response to specific agency mandates and existing funding. Needed consultations with agencies by the Programme to obtain technical inputs and to avoid the risk of duplicative activities did not always take place. The System-wide Action Plan was useful, for the agencies participating actively in the exercise, in facilitating agreement on problem definition and on main goals to pursue within the United Nations system; however, regarding joint coordination of activities, the "top-down" approach to planning that the System-wide Action Plan followed proved inadequate.

56. The Programme has also strongly advocated drug-related issues at the ACC Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions, or in other forums such as the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, so that significant drug problems receive adequate attention in United Nations strategic frameworks and other policy documents. In 1997, the Programme participated actively in the pilot work of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework initiative. Regarding international financial institutions, the Programme attempted to bring drug control aspects into their development schemes; examples of cost-sharing of drug control projects by recipient Governments, partly covered by international financial institutions loans, show the potential of such effort. However, in recent years, concerns have been expressed by the Commission and the General Assembly about limited progress by United Nations agencies to incorporate drug problems into their programmes.

57. The Programme has concluded formal cooperation agreements with several agencies that provide a context for increased collaboration. For example, in April 1996, the Programme and WHO signed a joint programme framework; two years later, 10 initiatives for collaboration have been identified. In September 1996, a cooperation framework was signed between the Programme and the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) (UNAIDS) in order to deal with direct linkages between HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. Under another kind of arrangement, since 1994, small amounts of funds contributed by one donor have been earmarked to finance drug control components of new projects and programmes in other United Nations agencies and

development banks, primarily in low-income countries. Between 1994 and 1996, 17 projects in eight agencies were implemented; this catalytic role could be developed further. In its comments on an earlier draft of the present report, UNICEF stated that, over the past three years, UNICEF has had a growing and productive collaboration with the Programme, and that in the formulation of formal collaborative arrangements, beyond existing informal arrangements, the Programme and its partners will need to be clear about the mutual benefit of such arrangements; UNICEF, for example, can offer operational capacity at the national level and a growing focus on programmes for young people, while it looks to the Programme to provide or identify technical and financial support.

G. Programme capacity

58. After the integration of the Fund secretariat within the Programme, the Programme further developed its technical expertise at headquarters and within its field office network. In 1990, there were 55 Professional posts at headquarters and 16 in country offices; in 1997, the numbers were, respectively, 108 and 64. In 1997, there were 20 field offices, many of them with regional or subregional responsibilities. Increased deployment to the field is planned for 1998. Over the past 10 years, the number of projects funded by the Programme has increased from 51 in 1986 to 301 in 1996. However, there were concerns regarding the capacity of the Programme to absorb additional resources and to expand its technical cooperation programmes accordingly, as envisaged in the Global Programme of Action.

59. Relatively high levels of the Fund's balance have been maintained in spite of guidelines received from the Commission as early as 1991. The Fund's balance was reduced from $100.2 million at the end of 1991 (see E/CN.7/1992/CRP.10, table 8) to $61.2 million at the end of 1994. Between 1994 and 1997, the Fund's balance remained at the same level; it was $61.8 million at the end of 1997. The Programme intends to further reduce the Fund's balance in future years until it reaches a minimum of approximately $30 million.

60. Problems of programme implementation are also reflected in underexpenditure of funds against final project budgets. During the period 1994-1995, underexpenditure was about 25 per cent; in Africa it was 42.8 per cent; by programme sector, underexpenditure was the highest under "Demand reduction" (40.8 per cent). The Programme attributed this low delivery to a low level of preparedness of recipient countries. The Programme recognized the need to strengthen monitoring and management of projects to ensure that they achieve what was intended and, to that end, it reorganized its field network. However, the application of criteria for establishing field offices, which include the level of programme resources managed by the office, still needs to be reviewed. Underexpenditures anticipated for the biennium 1996-1997 were of the same magnitude as for the previous biennium.

61. Slow programming and implementation were also attributable to the Programme's procedures and working methods. Projects, although belonging to plans already approved, required technical clearance within the Programme from up to five or six different units before being submitted to the Project Review Committee. The conclusion of agreements with partners and executing agencies can take several years, complicated by the lack of well-defined strategies to orient consultations and insufficient delegation of authority. The process is so lengthy that interested partners have been discouraged; some projects were no longer relevant when finally approved. United Nations rules and regulations on finance and personnel were also an impediment to faster programme implementation. Regarding other aspects of the efficiency of programme management, Programme practices were sometimes uneconomical; for example, staff travel could have been reduced by sending smaller delegations to meetings and seminars and through increased utilization of new communication technologies and increased delegation of authority to field representatives. In comments on an earlier draft of the present report, the Programme stated that it "is currently undergoing a major exercise to decentralize its operations and streamline organizational responsibilities and procedures. The issues addressed in paragraph 61 [of the present report] are of central concern in this reform exercise". In March 1998, the Programme issued a series of management instructions outlining the main points of its management reform.

H. Legislative guidance

62. One of the main goals pursued through the establishment of the Programme was to "ensure that the formulation and execution of operational activities are consistent with the provisions of the conventions, the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline and the Global Programme of Action and that appropriate legislative guidance is given in this respect" (A/45/652, para. 6). Government representatives have expressed concern about the Programme's ability to pursue the comprehensive

approach and priorities agreed upon. Too many projects were planned without clear links to other aspects of the drug problem in a given country or region. The Programme has made efforts to enhance its planning through country or regional programme frameworks but the Project Review Committee itself has made decisions that were not always in agreement with the orientations contained in frameworks and budget planning documents. In a related matter, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions stated, in 1995, that deficiencies in regard to financial planning, in its opinion, could be in part attributed to the fact that the Programme is donor driven, the number of donors is still small and the level of contributions is negotiated individually with each potential donor (E/CN.7/1995/18, para. 2). In presenting its proposed budget outline priorities for the biennium 1998-1999, the Programme stated that it "will shift from a project activity approach to a programme approach" (E/CN.7/1997/9, para. 95).

63. Before the establishment of the Programme, UNFDAC was not formally responsible to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, although its programmes adhered to the guidelines established by the Commission concerning the international strategy and policy for drug control. The General Assembly, in its resolution 46/185 C of 20 December 1991, section XVI, paragraph 2, authorized the Commission to approve "the budget of the programme of the Fund and the administrative and programme support costs budget". The Commission gave broad legislative guidance but the link between the adoption of mandates and the funding of activities remained weak. Main donors organized annual meetings to be kept informed of the Programme's progress in the planning and implementation of a selected number of programmes; those informal meetings, however, did not concern themselves with coordinating funding commitments. Overall, the system in place could not address a number of difficulties, one of which was the decline, after a peak in 1993, in general-purpose resources. Extrabudgetary funds are divided between "special-purpose" (earmarked for specific projects) and "general-purpose" funding; the decline of general-purpose contributions affects programme flexibility as it becomes increasingly difficult to provide for mandated activities not covered by special-purpose funding, as well as to launch new initiatives in response to emerging priority requirements. A mechanism for wider consultations during programme implementation could have offered needed guidance and support in a number of situations. For example, during the 1994-1995 programme cuts, the Programme discontinued some central programmes and lost the benefit of investments already made; in some cases, programmes were restarted at a later time. A number of projects were delayed, although most of the funds required had been mobilized and only small amounts were still lacking. Also, studies requested by the Commission did not proceed promptly to their next phase of development owing to the lack of inter-sessional guidance. In 1996, the Commission observed that measures designed to improve the governance of the Programme, for instance by establishing a special governing body in which both donor and recipient countries could together provide policy guidance and make decisions on the activities of the Programme should be considered.[26] The Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1997/37 of 21 July 1997, requested the Secretary-General to convene a small group of experts, *inter alia*, to identify any measures necessary to strengthen the core activities of the Programme, taking into account the work of the task force on the reform of the United Nations established by the Secretary-General.

VI. Recommendations

64. The following recommendations are based on the findings presented in sections III, IV and V of the present report.

Recommendation 1, Support of the United Nations international Drug Control Programme to the International Narcotics Control Board. To maintain INCB capacity to promote the compliance of Governments with the provisions of the treaties and to assist them in this effort, the results of the integration of the Board's secretariat into the Programme should be reviewed, with due attention to areas where the Programme and INCB can obtain stronger mutual support through increased coordination of their programme of work. This review should be coordinated jointly by the Executive Director of the Programme and the Chairman of INCB. The results of the review should be one of the policy documents guiding the formulation of the Programme's workplan for 1999. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 13 and 14.]

Recommendation 2, Support of the United Nations Drug Control Programme to assessments of the implementation of conventions. To support the work of INCB and its secretariat and of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Executive Director of the Programme should assign responsibility to review and evaluate national and multilateral drug control legislation to one organizational unit of the Programme; this unit should coordinate related work carried out elsewhere within the Programme. Annual reports on the results of this work should be submitted, as

appropriate, to INCB and the Commission. The Programme's senior management should utilize these readings of the effectiveness of the conventions to assist their support of government analysis and to provide a more solid base from which to give advice to Governments. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 16 and 17.]

Recommendation 3, Modifications in the scope of conventions' schedules. Considering the increasing global problem of the use of synthetic drugs and the length of the procedure leading to recommendations to change the scope of relevant conventions' schedules, the Programme should, in close collaboration with WHO, prepare joint Programme/WHO technical suggestions on improving the effectiveness of the present system, without amending the conventions. These suggestions should be presented to INCB and to the Commission in time for its forty-second session, for their consideration and action. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 18 and 19.]

Recommendation 4, Global monitoring of additional measures. (a) For issues covered by the conventions under broad prescriptions and for which Governments are developing comprehensive sets of specific measures, the Programme should monitor progress achieved worldwide and report its observations, as appropriate, to INCB and the Commission to help promote further action by the international community. (b) Monitoring, particularly in relation to such issues as money-laundering and demand reduction, should be done in collaboration with other United Nations and regional activities, to ensure that due attention is paid to aspects that are beyond the scope of the 1961, 1971 and 1988 Conventions. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 20 and 21.]

Recommendation 5, Simplifying government reporting requirements. The Programme should, after establishing proper procedures, utilize information collected by regional and other international organizations from national sources. The Programme should limit its requests to Governments to information not already available from regional and international organizations and which is needed for treaty-based requirements or is essential for programme implementation and policy development. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 23-26.]

Recommendation 6, Integrated information system of the Programme. (a) The Programme should designate a chairman for its informal focal group on information issues who would be responsible for the integrated collection and processing of information throughout the Programme; information management and data analysis personnel, deployed in several units and projects, should be accountable to the chairman of the focal group for their contributions to the Programme's integrated information system. (b) The Programme should, as a follow-up to the 1997 expert meeting on drug information, develop and update, in collaboration with other organizations, guidelines and core indicators that can be used by national drug control authorities and international organizations. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 27-30.]

Recommendation 7, A more active role for the Programme Laboratory. The Programme Laboratory, in addition to its regular programme of work and within existing mandates, should take timely initiatives to carry out or coordinate research on, *inter alia*, new drugs of abuse, health aspects of drug abuse and new technologies of interest for drug control programmes. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 32-34.]

Recommendation 8, Dissemination of information. (a) By the end of 1998, the Programme should adopt a strategy, in conformity with mandates given to the Programme, to ensure that the institutional and specialized information available to it is made accessible to all government personnel and professional groups involved in drug control activities. (b) The Programme should develop its global clearing-house function, starting with the priority mandates given to the United Nations in the Global Programme of Action. In this respect, the Programme should conceive its role primarily as a facilitator for the exchange of information, not a repository of it, taking into account systems already in place worldwide at the global, regional or subregional levels. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 37 and 38.]

Recommendation 9, Promoting collaborative efforts. In compliance with existing mandates, the Programme should promote collaborative efforts in each of its major areas of responsibility. This should be done, to the extent possible, through government-sponsored activities, intergovernmental organizations, existing non-governmental organization networks and professional or scientific associations. A strategy to constitute such broadly based alliances should be developed by the end of 1998 and presented to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-second session. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 39-44.]

Recommendation 10, Legal Advisory Programme. (a) When legal assistance is requested by Governments to adopt or adjust drug control legislation and relevant administrative measures, such assistance should include support for effective implementation; the Programme's legal workshops

should help resolve implementation problems related, for example, to adjustments to existing national penal codes. (b) The Programme should identify new potential regional working partners and evaluate and improve joint work with existing ones, in particular to develop further the training of prosecutors and judges. (c) The allocation of resources should permit the Legal Advisory Programme, by itself or through collaborating institutions, to respond to government requests, particularly with respect to monitoring the implementation of legislation, to advise on further adjustments needed and to provide the additional assistance that may be required. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 46 and 47.]

Recommendation 11, Support to Governments in the planning of drug control programmes. (a) To assist in the implementation of government drug control programmes, the Programme should assess needs and identify multilateral and bilateral resources available and gaps in resources. In doing so, the Programme should take into account its earlier experience with the Coordination Mechanism used in central and eastern Europe and apply that Mechanism to all programmes in the form needed to complement coordination arrangements already in place. (b) A focal point for the coordination of drug control training should be re-established in the Programme by the end of 1998; the focal point should ensure that, in the planning of its assistance programmes, the Programme identifies drug control training resources existing within and outside the United Nations system, and takes action to ensure the well-coordinated use of those resources and to resolve gaps in assistance provided by the international community. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 51 and 52.]

Recommendation 12, Strategies aimed at reducing significant elements of the global drug problem. The Programme should formulate, by the end of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse, separate comprehensive proposals for action aimed at reducing significant elements of the global drug problem for the seven core areas of concern set out in the Global Programme of Action. Such proposals for action should make full use of the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system and the development programmes of other multilateral institutions and should include a monitoring mechanism. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 53 and 54.]

Recommendation 13, Coordination within the United Nations system. (a) The Programme should use the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control primarily as a strategic framework to encourage interaction at the working level between relevant units of programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, with a view to promoting the programming and coordinated implementation of drug control related activities. Within the context of the ACC Subcommittee on Drug Control, the Programme should monitor these activities in relation to the main goals of the System-wide Action Plan. (b) The Programme should develop collaborative arrangements with all United Nations specialized agencies that have programmes relevant to the seven core areas of concern set out in the Global Programme of Action; collaborative arrangements should take into account, at the country level, the capacity of the United Nations Resident Coordinator system. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 55-57.]

Recommendation 14, Legislative guidance and capacity to implement programmes. The Programme should propose to the Commission at its forty-second session procedures for obtaining inter-sessional legislative guidance to deal with changing circumstances and funding problems that would otherwise impair its ability to implement programmes promptly in agreement with mandated priorities. [For findings supporting this recommendation, see paragraphs 62 and 63.]

65. Under its terms of reference, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs supervises the activities of the Programme. It is desirable that the present report, together with the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination thereon, be brought to the attention of the Commission. The present report takes into account the results of the preparatory process for the 1998 special session of the General Assembly devoted to the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities. The Programme will need to implement the recommendations of the Committee in the light of the outcome of the special session.

Recommendation 15, Action by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The present report, together with the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee on Programme and Coordination thereon, should be submitted to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-second session for review and action.

(*Signed*) Karl Th. **Paschke**
Under-Secretary-General
for Internal Oversight Services

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/51/16), part I, para. 55.

[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 520, No. 7515.

[3] Ibid., vol. 1019, No. 14956.

[4] See *Official Records of the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Vienna, 25 November-20 December 1988*, vol. I (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XI.5).

[5] *Report of the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Vienna, 17-26 June 1987* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.87.I.18), chap. I, sect. A, para. 7.

[6] Ibid., para. 8.

[7] Ibid., sect. A.

[8] *Effectiveness of the International Drug Control Treaties: Supplement to the Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XI.5), para. 110 (a).

[9] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 10* (E/1994/30), chap. XI, resolution 7 (XXXVII), para. 4.

[10] *The Canadian Yearbook of International Law*, vol. XXVII (Vancouver, Canada, University of British Columbia Press, 1989), p. 290.

[11] *Effectiveness of the International Drug Control Treaties* ..., para. 105.

[12] Ibid., para. 65.

[13] *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.XI.1), paras. 35-36.

[14] *Effectiveness of the International Drug Control Treaties* ..., para. 19.

[15] Ibid., para. 20.

[16] General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex.

[17] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1991, Supplement No. 4* and corrigendum (E/1991/24 and Corr.1), para. 26.

[18] Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/Organization, section UNDCP), sect. 2.3.

[19] United Nations Drug Control Programme, *World Drug Report* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 9.

[20] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1991, Supplement No. 4* ..., chap. XIV.

[21] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6* and Corrigendum (A/47/6/Rev.1 and Corr.1), para. 28.7.

[22] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 7* (E/1996/27), chap. XIV.

[23] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 7* (E/1996/27), paras. 90 and 92.

[24] First Task Force Meeting, Vienna, 26-28 April 1993.

[25] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 7* (E/1996/27), para. 33.

[26] Ibid., para. 32.